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Recent Research

VI. RECENT RESEARCH

PROJECT: ADAPTATION IN A HIMALAYAN VILLAGE

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Sponsored by: National Geographic Society

This project was carried out in a village in Helambu between June and August 1986. It was a pilot project to examine some aspects of middle altitude adaptions in a Sherpa village, and to develop some hypotheses concerning the impact of outmigration and zomo husbandry on environmental adaption. Building on data collected in 1971-72, demographic and reproductive data were collected on a single village. In addition, alternative choices in animal husbandry in this altitude zone were examined, especially the herding of zomo and now, yak in Helambu. Ten thousand feet (five hours) of 16mm film were shot focussed primarily on animal husbandry and Bon and Buddhist religious rituals. Data analysis is presently underway, and a further report of the findings will appear in the Himalayan Research Bulletin.

PROJECT: LAND USE CAPABILITY OF RANISUARA PANCHAYAT, GORKHA, NEPAL

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Sponsored by: Resources Conservation and Utilization Project, Nepal

This research was conducted during 1982-1985. The present land use and ownership pattern of Ranisura Panchayat, Gorkha District, Nepal were determined from the survey map and field records of plots of land obtained from the Maintenance Survey Office, Gorkha. A land use survey from the people in the Panchayat and various offices in Gorkha was conducted to support the above data for present land use conditions. The land use map drwan from aerial photographs obtained from the Nepal Remote Sensing Center was also used for comparison. Based on the soil and land properties that were obtained from soil survey information of the Ranisuara Panchayat Resources Conservation and Utilization Project, Nepal, the lands of the Panchayat were grouped into eight classes, two subclasses and various units according to the kind and degree of limitations. The result was that there were 6237 plots of land covering 1731 ha area, out of which agricultural land contributed 54.4%, forestry 31.5%, bush land 3.0%, range land 0.3% and waste land 4.3% of the area. Land covered by streams, trails, highways, drainages, etc. constituted 6.5% of the area. Pakho land constituted nearly 3 times the number of plots and area than khet land of the cultivated land, showing a higher amount of uplands in the hilly region. Sim and Cahar were the predominant types of land in both the khet and pakho land indicating that good fertile lands were very limited in the hills. The average plot size was 0.28 ha whereas the average size of cultivated plot was 0.17 ha. The average size of holding per person was 1.24 for the number of plots and 0.34 ha for the area of the land, whereas the size of the holding of cultivated land per person was 1.12 for the number of plots and 0.19 ha for the area. Private land contributed 87.4% of the plots and 52.4% of the area, whereas government land contributed 6.0% of the plots and 43.2% of the area. The average plot size of the government land was 2.0 ha and that of private land was 0.17 ha 97%of the private land was cultivable type. Government land included 73% of the forest

area. Chhetris and Magars held the highest amount of land with highest size of holding than all the other ethnic groups. Comparison of land use with the map from aerial photographs indicated that agricultural land and forestry land constituted 64% and 29% as opposed to 54% and 31% in this project. The location of land uses was also found to be different. Capability classification of the land indicated that about 55% of the land was more than 60% slope and cannot be used for cultivation. Only 5.2% of the area was found in class II land that has few limitations for agriculture. It was found that about 9% of the agricultural land had been overutilized at present. Class VI land constituted 42.5% of the area and should be used for range and forestry. About 5.6% of the land should be used for protection forestry. The comparison of the classification system of this project with other systems that are recommended for use in Nepal indicated that this system gives detailed classification of the land and cam be directly applied to the hilly regions of Nepal than the other systems. The land utilization map prepared by superimposing the present land use map with the land capability map indicated that about 45% of the land was overutilized , out of which 2% of the land was found to be very severely overutilized and 49% to be properly utilized. It is recommended that underutilized land can be brought under proper land use, but the overutilized lands should be protected against soil erosion through appropriate conservation measures.